



**STRATEGY  
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**COVERT ACTION: TODAY'S POLICY - FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

**BY**

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**Covert Action: Today's Policy - Future Implications**

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## ABSTRACT

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Past indiscretions and public dismay cast a dubious shadow over the United States Covert Action (CA) capability as a viable and legitimate instrument of national power. With the current U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) of "engagement and enlargement," does CA provide our nation a feasible option when diplomacy offers too little, and military action offers too much? This paper supports current national policy that CA does, and will continue to play a vital role in our NSS, and discusses CA's viability and implications for the future. At an unclassified level, CA can be defined and de-mystified to better understand the nature of CA; current policy regarding CA and its applicability to the NSS; arguments against/for CA; CA authority, approval, and oversight mechanisms; and suggested pre-conditions to assist in determining the utility of CA when its potential employment is under consideration. Finally, this paper examines CA's relevance given current affairs, downsizing, and fiscal constraints; and identifies potential emerging CA challenges and opportunities for the future. Despite past "failures," countless undisclosed successes have furthered American values and

supported U.S. national interests. As a "quiet option," CA has provided our President with flexibility in defending our nation's security and national security interests.

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## INTRODUCTION

The United States must maintain a viable covert action (CA) capability to support U.S. national security objectives. CA functions well as a select instrument of national power when diplomacy offers too little, and the military option offers too much. This paper will: define and explain the term CA; address the current U.S. policy regarding CA; link CA and our current National Security Strategy (NSS); list prevailing arguments for/against conducting CA; outline the authority, approval/review process, and oversight mechanisms concerning CA; suggest eight pre-conditions before employing CA as a policy tool; discuss CA's relevance given the current environment and competing budget constraints; identify current challenges and potential emerging opportunities; and offer conclusions supporting current U.S. CA policy.

## COVERT ACTION DEFINED

President Reagan signed Executive Order (EO) 12333 in 1981 which in part defined "Special Activities" (covert action) as "Activities conducted in support of national foreign policies abroad..."<sup>1</sup>

On 14 August, 1991, President Bush signed the Intelligence Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1991. Section 503(e) specifically defined CA in statute for the first time as:

The term 'covert action' means an activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad,

where it is intended that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly, but does not include:

activities the primary purpose of which is to acquire intelligence, traditional counterintelligence activities, traditional activities to improve or maintain the operational security of United States Government programs, or administrative activities;

traditional diplomatic or military activities or routine support to such activities;

traditional law enforcement activities conducted by United States Government law enforcement agencies or routine support to such activities;

activities to provide routine support to the overt activities...of other United States Government Agencies abroad.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, the law further directs that "no covert action may be conducted which is intended to influence United States political processes, public opinion, policies, or media."<sup>3</sup>

The 1991 Intelligence Authorization Act emphasizes a key point. The U.S. will conduct activities to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad, but the "...role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly..."<sup>4</sup> Also, by law, CA can only be conducted to support "identifiable" foreign policy objectives.<sup>5</sup> CA is clearly viewed as a viable and legitimate instrument of national power to be used alone, or in concert with diplomatic, economic, information, or military instruments.

The 1948 NSC Directive 10/2 explains what forms special activities (covert action) may take.

...propaganda, economic warfare, preventive direct action including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures, subversion against hostile states including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrilla and refugee liberation groups and support of indigenous anti-Communist elements.<sup>6</sup>

These forms of covert action typically fall into one of the following categories:

- 1) propaganda activities which provide information, disinformation, or help persuade/dissuade public opinion abroad.
- 2) political action which influences, shapes, or supports foreign politics and/or policies.
- 3) intelligence assistance which involves liaison, support, or help to outside intelligence services or activities.
- 4) paramilitary support to resistance movements, insurgents, military or unconventional forces.
- 5) economic activities to support or manipulate foreign economies, labor unions, or businesses.<sup>7</sup>

One final and important point regarding CA must be understood. Because of its secretive nature, and its critical use and dependence on intelligence sources and methods, CA has always been an intelligence program, function, and responsibility. Although technically categorized as an intelligence program, CA actually falls into a unique category all its own. Heavily operational by nature, CA "...differs from other intelligence community activities in that it is an

instrument of policy, designed to fill the void between diplomacy and military force."<sup>8</sup>

### **CURRENT POLICY**

Our two capstone national policy documents (A National Security Strategy for a New Century, (NSS) May 1997; Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review, May 1997) do not explicitly address CA as an instrument of national power, much less its use as a means within our NSS to support U.S. foreign policy objectives abroad. This conspicuous absence rests with the secretive nature of CA as a foreign policy tool. Our national policy regarding CA must be synthesized from the specified national security and foreign policy objectives outlined in the NSS; and the definitions and authorizations for CA found in various Executive Orders (EO), National Security Directives, and statutory guidelines.

Simply put, America's "implied" policy openly declares its prerogative to maintain a CA capability; and to conduct such actions as determined by the President, with timely notification to Congress, and within established statutes, legal mandates, and oversight mechanisms.

### **CA AND THE NSS**

How does CA fit into a strategy (ends, ways, means) to support our national policies? Our NSS states that "...American leadership and engagement in the world are vital for our

security."<sup>9</sup> Under our current policy of "engagement and enlargement" the NSS lists the "physical security of our territory and that of our allies, the safety of our citizens, and our economic well-being" as vital U.S. interests.<sup>10</sup> To shape the international environment America must: "remain engaged abroad" to "promote peace and prosperity" and

...use America's leadership to harness global forces of integration, reshape existing security, economic and political structures, and build new ones that help create conditions necessary for our interests and values to thrive.<sup>11</sup>

The NSS further identifies as core objectives: "To enhance our security with effective diplomacy and with military forces that are ready to fight and win. To bolster America's economic prosperity. To promote democracy abroad."<sup>12</sup>

Given these objectives, or "ends", CA assets and resources present a viable tool, or "means" to accomplish those ends through a variety of methods, or "ways." By applying any one, or a combination of the categories in the CA "toolbox" (propaganda, political action, economic, intelligence support, and/or paramilitary) in concert with the calculated application of the other instruments of U.S. power (particularly diplomatic, and military) the President can effectively carry out U.S. foreign policy, and accomplish America's strategic objectives to meet the challenges facing our nation today.

As President Clinton clearly articulated in 1997's NSS: "Our tools of foreign policy must be able to shape the

international environment, respond to the full spectrum of potential crises and prepare against future threats."<sup>13</sup> CA provides just such a tool.

### **ARGUMENTS AGAINST/FOR**

The notoriety surrounding past CA scandals effectively tainted these special activities as CIA "dirty little tricks." Examples include blundered assassination attempts against Fidel Castro; the Bay of Pigs fiasco; and more recently, the Iran-Contra affair. In nearly every case, these "failures" can be largely attributed to one or more of the following: "rogue elephants" operating without proper authority or established oversight; ambiguous or absent foreign policy objectives; imbalance between "ends" desired and the "means" employed; a proxy instrument of power rather than one more appropriate; and CA used as a "singleton" panacea rather than in tandem with other instruments. One can reasonably argue that any previous CA malpractice or misapplication existed in the "way" it was applied rather than in its utility as a means to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives.

The secret nature of CA runs against the grain of our democratic society. Idealists in particular find difficulty in accepting any means that may seek to interfere in the affairs of another nation state, albeit in support of American foreign policy objectives. Arguments offered against America's use of CA

include its ineffectiveness in third world countries due to the emergent sophistication of those countries; the unpredictability of CA programs that may cause unintended consequences; the undermining of long-term diplomacy efforts on the part of overt relationships with foreign governments; and the resultant diversion of resources from other intelligence and diplomatic programs as a consequence of covert actions gone sour, and gone public.<sup>14</sup> Included among the more notable fiascoes: the Bay of Pigs; plots to assassinate Fidel Castro; abandoning anti-Communist groups during the Cold War; and ineffective involvement in the Angolan Civil War.<sup>15</sup>

However, the voices of those arguing in favor of maintaining America's CA capability can be equally persuasive. Most cite as advantages CA's use as a "middle option" to fill the void between diplomacy and military commitment; its speed and responsiveness of action compared to decisions that require endless bureaucratic red tape and layers of staffing; the strategic impact made through long-range gains and alliances strengthened without the public acknowledgment of U.S. involvement in actions outside our borders; and the fact that some foreign leaders, or foreign leaders in some circumstances, prefer the deniability of American involvement as an attractive means to quietly assist U.S. foreign policy objectives abroad.<sup>16</sup>

CA success stories include: post-World War II support to anti-Communist resistance groups in Europe; Radio Free Europe and

Radio Liberty; and support to the Afghan rebels combating the Soviets in the 1980's.<sup>17</sup> Keep in mind that this small sampling of CA successes does not do sufficient justice to the true size and scope of these sensitive programs in supporting U.S. national security. Countless thousands of actions, just since World War II alone, remain classified and undisclosed.

### **AUTHORITY**

The controversy surrounding America's capability to conduct CA and its history of uses and abuses of this instrument continues today. Under what authority does America conduct these "special activities"?

The National Security Act of 1947 provides the statutory basis for the CIA to "perform such other functions and duties related to intelligence affecting the national security as the President or the National Security Council may direct."<sup>18</sup>

Executive Order (EO) 12333 (signed by President Reagan) specifically authorizes the CIA to conduct these activities as authorized by the President. EO 12333 further states that other departments and agencies may also be directed to undertake or support these activities as the President may authorize.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, President Bush's signing of the Intelligence Authorization Act in 1991, for the first time formally and publicly established and defined CA in U.S. statute.<sup>20</sup>

An idea or proposal to conduct CA can originate from virtually anywhere within Washington D.C.. Department of State (DOS), Department of Defense (DOD), the National Security Council (NSC), and the various agencies that comprise the intelligence community (roughly thirteen federal agencies) may suggest a solution to a given problem in which CA could potentially play a role.<sup>21</sup>

Should a proposal merit serious consideration, an interagency committee (including senior members from DOS, DOD, CIA, and the NSC staff) reviews the proposal to decide whether or not to recommend its further development and future execution. If the CA proposal receives the NSC's (through the interagency committee) recommendation to execute, a "Presidential Finding" (PF) is prepared for the President's approval and signature.<sup>22</sup>

Only the President can authorize covert actions to be undertaken by the United States. The President executes this authority by signing and issuing a PF. At a minimum, the PF must determine that the contemplated CA is "necessary to support identified foreign policy objectives and is important to National Security."<sup>23</sup>

The sensitivity and potential consequences inherent in CA programs mandate close control and scrutiny by the most senior executive leadership. Explicit and comprehensive approval and oversight mechanisms to minimize abuses and impropriety at all

levels have evolved due to past indiscretions, our societal values, and our democratic government process.

### **APPROVAL/REVIEW**

Once the President issues his PF directing a CA program be executed, he must notify Congress "as soon as possible." Under U.S. statute, Congressional notification means that the President must notify Congress' two intelligence committees (Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI), and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI)). An exception to this process may occur if the President determines it "essential to limit access to meet extraordinary circumstances affecting vital interests of the U.S." In that case, he may notify only the two (majority and minority) leaders of both the SSCI and HPSCI, and the majority and minority leaders of both the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.<sup>24</sup>

Variables such as world events, current U.S. national security strategy, the incumbent administration, and key personalities within DOS, DOD, NSC, et al, greatly affect the ways and means of implementing U.S. policy to achieve national objectives and shape global affairs. Not surprisingly, some administrations have been more proactive in approving and applying CA as an instrument of power than have others. For example, "One House [of Representatives] committee source has estimated that the House Intelligence Committee caused the

modification or abandonment of six proposed covert actions over a period of six years during the Reagan administration."<sup>25</sup>

### **OVERSIGHT**

Oversight for covert actions contemplated/conducted begins with the agency responsible for the activity through a system of checks and balances which includes that agency's Inspector General (IG). Within the U.S. Government, each of the three branches (executive, legislative, judicial) also maintains and conducts an oversight responsibility.

The agency's General Council and the U.S. Attorney General have judicial oversight responsibilities to validate an intended action's legality and lawful propriety. As described above, Congress (SSCI and HPSCI) maintain legislative oversight. The President (and his President's Foreign Intelligence Activities Board (PFIAB, Intelligence Oversight Board (IOB)), National Security Council, along with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provide executive oversight.<sup>26</sup>

In summary, all CA proposals undergo rigorous executive, judicial, and legislative review, approval, and oversight processes before execution. At any point in the process a proposal may require modification, revision, or be completely scrapped due to any number of factors, to include legal or political concerns.

## PRE-CONDITIONS

The nature of CA combined with public disdain regarding past disclosures, suggests specific pre-conditions be established and met before the U.S. commits to employing this option.

Roy Godson, and Ernest May discuss such pre-conditions in their book, U.S. Intelligence at the Crossroads: Agendas for Reform. May contends that Godson's three proposed criteria (coherent policy by a government that has decided what it wants to do; well-coordinated policy in tandem with diplomatic, military, and economic measures; and maintaining the covertness of actions underway) cannot be achieved given the nature of today's politics and international environment. Instead, he offers three substitute criteria (public and congressional consensus regarding interests to be served; bureaucratically feasible; executive authorizing officials and Congress prepared to accept the consequences when the "covertness" is compromised).<sup>27</sup>

While both Godson and May present valid positions, yet a third proposition may provide a more thorough and viable pre-condition checklist. Part of a comprehensive CA policy should consider the following before conducting CA as a foreign policy tool: specify national interests and foreign policy objectives; establish CA objectives, command and control, rules of engagement, and intent; determine that CA offers the best option;

define CA "ways" and obtain commitment; expect public support; integrate and synchronize CA; consult with Congress; and, accept the political risks associated with conducting a given CA program.

**1) Specify national interests and well-define foreign policy objectives.** As required by law, the President must identify specific foreign policy objectives to be accomplished through CA before issuing a Presidential Finding (PF) directing CA be conducted. By delineating and linking clear national interests and foreign policy objectives up front, the utility and viability of CA as a desirable and feasible option can be more objectively evaluated.

**2) Determine that CA clearly offers the only/best option to accomplish the objectives identified.** This step naturally follows an up-front determination that national interests and foreign policy objectives require action. The sensitive nature of CA, coupled with the potential damage created by an operation or program "gone wrong", must be carefully calculated in light of the expected benefits gained. If CA does not offer the only or best option to satisfy those objectives, perhaps CA should not be considered further.

**3) Clearly establish achievable CA objectives, a clear command and control structure, "rules of engagement" and articulate Presidential (national) intent.** Once determined that

CA indeed provides a practical, feasible, and reasonable option, the objectives and end state desired must be clearly defined. What must be accomplished, and how will success be determined? Authority, accountability, and responsibility must be fixed by identifying a clear chain-of-command, oversight, and span of control for a given CA program. Clear "rules of engagement" that frame what actions are authorized, by whom, and under what conditions must be codified and understood by all. Finally, the President's intent embedded in the PF's language and directives must be analyzed and expressed to insure clear specified and implied direction in developing a CA program to meet that intent.

**4) Evaluate the ends and means, and define the ways CA will be conducted; obtain commitment by all (executive and legislative) to "stay the course."** After determining that CA capabilities or resources (means) provide the only or best option to achieve the desired outcome (end), a program (ways) to apply those capabilities or resources to accomplish the desired end state must be developed. What method(s) will be employed (i.e. propaganda, political action, intelligence assistance, paramilitary support, economic activities); are the methods being considered practical, feasible, and reasonable; what are the legal issues and implications of methods and actions under consideration? Before proceeding, those in positions of authority, oversight, and responsibility must clearly commit and resolve to follow-through and support a given CA program once

executed. Any wavering once underway could, at a minimum, jeopardize success of the program; or worse, spell disaster (for example the lack of promised U.S. air support to the Cuban expatriate force during their invasion of the Cuban mainland at the Bay of Pigs).

**5) Integrate and synchronize CA with other means and instruments of power to achieve the objectives identified.** A common theme and contributing factor to the more notable, and public CA failures of the past has been that CA was employed in a stand-alone mode. As with all the instruments of power, CA provides but one among a variety of options. The leverage and synergy achieved by integrating and synchronizing CA with the other instruments of power yields maximum results and offers the best possible opportunity for success. In very few cases and with very few exceptions, CA must always be linked in a supporting or supported role with one or more of the other instruments.

**6) Reasonably expect that if known, the American public would support the conduct and methods contemplated through CA to achieve the objectives identified.** This simple "public conscience" check follows the reasonable man approach in law. CA should only be conducted if the capabilities, resources, methods and objectives being considered would be expected to receive public support, or at worst withstand public scrutiny should the

public be made aware. Passing this litmus test accomplishes three things: 1) Minimizes the expected public affairs and media damage should the CA program under consideration become compromised; 2) Causes the CA program under consideration to be more politically palatable, and therefore more politically acceptable; and, 3) Assuages the tendency toward reservation of whether or not CA (in a given circumstance) is the right thing to do.

**7) Consult with Congress before taking action to gain congressional awareness and support (consistent with current statute).** Under U.S. statute, the President must notify Congress as soon as possible after executing a PF directing that a CA program be conducted (except under extraordinary circumstances affecting vital interests of the U.S.). But, whenever prudently possible (risk to compromise considered) congressional attention (specifically SSCI and HPSCI) early in the CA consideration process, and informed involvement throughout specific CA planning and development processes gain congressional complicity and ownership for actions considered, and assure legislative support during CA program execution.

**8) Be willing to accept the political risks should an action be compromised and U.S. involvement becomes public knowledge.** This is probably the most difficult, yet perhaps the most important of the pre-conditions to satisfy. Regardless of

the expected gains or risks involved, CA by its very nature causes palpitations in the political chests of our elected officials. The President accepts the political risks in writing by signing the PF directing a CA be conducted. Accomplishing the preceding seven pre-conditions listed above (particularly numbers 6 and 7) will exponentially increase the chances of political acceptability.

The eight pre-conditions offered are not intended to be followed sequentially in a step-by-step fashion. Rather, they are intended to serve as a composite checklist to increase the probability of success in those cases where and when CA provides an option for consideration. Applying an established set of pre-conditions before conducting CA as a foreign policy tool may help future actions succeed where past actions have failed.

### **RELEVANCY**

The existence, importance, and future of any national intelligence program largely depends on its contributions, responsiveness, and return on investment - in other words its relevancy to support national requirements. Enchantment with computer chip technology, micro-processing, and the information revolution, pervades as the panacea to cure all intelligence ailments and shortfalls. In view of the current fiscally constrained environment, past CA applications, methodologies, and

applications to standing requirements may compel an evolutionary or perhaps even revolutionary approach to and within CA affairs.

The health, vitality, and vigor of CA programs have varied from administration to administration since the National Security Act of 1947 which provided CIA's statutory charter to conduct these programs. At the height of the cold war in the 1950's, nearly half the CIA budget supported CA programs. Between 1961 and 1975 over 900 covert actions occurred according to the Church Committee's 1976, six-volume report on national intelligence issues.<sup>28</sup>

In more recent history, CA ebbed during the Carter years (1977-81); but the Reagan administration considerably revitalized CA initiatives under then Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) William Casey (1981-86). Following Casey's tenure as DCI, executive support for CA programs again waned to its present level.<sup>29</sup> Open (unclassified) sources report, of the CIA's estimated three billion dollar annual budget, the CIA currently "devotes only about two percent of its resources to covert action."<sup>30</sup>

Specific figures, both in terms of dollars and personnel statistics, assigned to or supporting CA programs remain classified. However, a decrement from nearly fifty percent to two percent (estimates based on unclassified sources) of an

agency's annual budget over the past forty-plus years seems dramatic.<sup>31</sup>

No simple explanation adequately answers the obvious question of why CA funding dropped so sharply over the years. Nonetheless, one may reasonably deduce some possible reasons why this decline may have happened.

Post-World War II, cold war hysteria regarding communist expansionism with an implied (and very real) threat of global nuclear warfare and mutually assured destruction fomented America's paranoia to combat communism's "forces of evil" on almost any battlefield by employing all possible means to assure democracy's triumph. CA and its associated kitbag of "dirty little tricks" provided lucrative, inexpensive, and low-visibility options that seemed more than justified given the size and nature of the threat facing democracy and its champion, the United States.

The demise of the Soviet Union and the virtual collapse of communism eliminated a real, ominous, and tangible national threat. Media frenzy over the years reporting alleged CIA improprieties, infamous deeds, and conspiratorial relationships with ruthless despots created at the very least a modicum of distrust, mystery, and even fear in middle-America and in Congress. Ironically, CA's secrecy, its sine qua non, prohibited the CIA from defending itself against the protracted media blitz by countering allegation with fact. The many successes and

intrepid deeds accomplished in the defense of our national security went unreported while only the headline sensationalized misdeeds captured public attention.

Given this background, the current state of affairs, and considering the absence of a looming or imminent conventional threat facing our country, reductions in any agency over time should be expected. Factoring in the public's growing proclivity to shun foreign policy in favor of domestic programs; and the sizable downsizing mandates and initiatives directed toward DOD, national government agencies, and public service organizations in general, any decline in budget, manpower, or other resources should come as no surprise. In fact, National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies reports in its Strategic Assessment 1996 report that:

In the United States, the new focus on domestic issues has caused a decline in the resources available for foreign policy instruments. Between fiscal years 1985 and 1995, in real terms, funding for national defense fell 34 percent, and funding for international affairs fell 46 percent...<sup>32</sup>

Although the current budget and personnel size of the intelligence community are classified, both budgetary and personnel figures are headed downward. Each agency is smaller in the mid-1990s than it was in the late 1980s, and Congress has mandated further cuts from what the press speculates was a \$28 billion 1995 budget, so that levels by the year 2000 will be only about 75 percent of 1985-89 levels.<sup>33</sup>

For a projected fiscally austere future, the bottom line remains one of relevancy. As expected, any shortfall or inability to convincingly demonstrate, justify and clearly

articulate one's purpose proportionally increases the risk of being downsized, realigned, or eliminated altogether.

Essentially then, CA's relevance in comparison with competing capabilities, tools, and more public instruments of national power appears to have declined markedly since the mid-1950s.

Despite CA's smaller share of CIA's annual budget, the unique capabilities, contributions, talents, and options CA offers assure its continued, though perhaps leaner existence.

### **EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES**

The President, in our current NSS document, identifies the dangers and threats facing our nation today which stretch over the horizon and into the twenty-first century. The imperatives of engagement and enlargement chart a vision to assure America's national security and continued prosperity - but not without a cost.

As we enter the twenty-first century, we have an unprecedented opportunity to make our nation safer and more prosperous...At the same time, the dangers we face are unprecedented in their complexity. Ethnic conflict and outlaw states threaten regional stability; terrorism, drugs, organized crime and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are global concerns that transcend national borders; and environmental damage and rapid population growth undermine economic prosperity and political stability in many countries.<sup>34</sup>

International affairs and U.S. foreign policy represent the cornerstones of a strategy to provide peace at home while remaining active abroad. Diplomacy, military preparedness, and CA's selective application (as a middle option) provide critical

elements to support our foreign policy and NSS objectives -  
"...we must have the diplomatic and military tools to meet all  
these challenges...We can only preserve our security and well  
being at home by being actively involved in the world beyond our  
borders."<sup>35</sup>

More than one-hundred conflicts are raging around the world  
today.<sup>36</sup> Of these, roughly thirty can be classified as major  
conflicts (over one-thousand battlefield deaths) at any given  
moment.<sup>37</sup> Yet reduced spending in international affairs,  
currently only one percent of today's federal budget, continues  
to hinder our ability to accomplish the nation's strategic  
goals.<sup>38</sup> Since the forecast for increased foreign policy  
spending does not appear optimistic, U.S. instruments of national  
power must be specifically, selectively, and surgically applied.  
Critical issues and burgeoning crises dictate that we develop,  
orchestrate, and focus new and innovative approaches to maximize  
our return on investment.

An uncertain future consisting of ethnic conflict; regional  
strife; outlaw states; weapons of mass destruction; international  
terrorism; global organized crime; expanding world population;  
rampant poverty; increasing disparity between the "haves" and the  
"have nots"; an expanding chasm between the intellectuals and  
illiterates; growing competition for limited resources and fossil  
fuels; and environmental concerns lay ahead. These dilemmas

predict a pessimistic future on the one hand; but on the other hand these maladies represent a field fertile in emerging opportunities.<sup>39</sup>

The window of opportunity remains open for CA (as an instrument of power) to rise to the occasion and challenge the future. Statutes, directives, methodologies, and approaches developed in the 1940's (i.e. the National Security Act of 1947 and NSC Directive 10/2 (1948)) to meet the requirements of that day may be ineffective or completely irrelevant to issues critical today and in the new millennium.

Innovation and evolution enable contribution, responsiveness, and return on investment - relevance, in other words. Potential CA applications in Information Operations; future's technology in space, miniaturization, weaponry, automation, and metallurgy; revolutions in information, military and business affairs; transnational and asymmetrical threats; and increasing global interdependence, to name but a few, abound. The critical need and opportunity for CA applications to help shape our nation's security, now and in the future, have never been greater.

### **CONCLUSION**

CA remains a viable and legitimate instrument of U.S. national power. In searching for the proper tool to support U.S. interests and identifiable foreign policy objectives when diplomacy seems inadequate or military force appears too heavy

handed, the President can employ CA to bridge this critical gap. The Commission on the Roles and Capabilities of the United States Intelligence Community concluded in its March, 1996 report that "...a capability to conduct covert actions should be maintained to provide the President with an option short of military action when diplomacy alone cannot do the job."<sup>40</sup>

In spite of the infamous CA "failures" propagated by the media, innumerable (and undisclosed) successes have furthered American values and democracy's cause. Covert Action as a "quiet option" has provided past Presidents with flexibility in defending our national security interests and should continue to do so in the next millennium.

WORD COUNT - 5586

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>John B. Chomeau, "Covert Action's Proper Role in U.S. Policy," International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence 2, no. 3 (1988): 407.

<sup>2</sup>Allan E. Goodman and Bruce D. Berkowitz, The Need to Know: The Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Covert Action and American Democracy (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1992), 29-30.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Commission on the Roles and Capabilities of the United States Intelligence Community, Preparing for the 21st Century: An Appraisal of U.S. Intelligence, report prepared by Harold Brown and Warren B. Rudman (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), 17.

<sup>6</sup>Goodman and Berkowitz, 32.

<sup>7</sup>Roy Godson, Ernest R. May, and Gary Schmitt, eds., U.S. Intelligence at the Crossroads: Agendas for Reform (Washington: Brassey's, 1995), 156-157; Goodman and Berkowitz, 33.

<sup>8</sup>Patrick Clawson, ed., Strategic Assessment 1996 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), 63.

<sup>9</sup>William J. Clinton, A National Security Strategy for a New Century (Washington: The White House, May 1997), 2.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., i.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>14</sup>Goodman and Berkowitz, 45-47.

<sup>15</sup>Loch K. Johnson, Secret Agencies: U.S. Intelligence in a Hostile World (New York: Vail-Ballou Press, 1996), 197.

<sup>16</sup>Goodman and Berkowitz, 41-43.

<sup>17</sup>Johnson, 196-197.

<sup>18</sup>Commission on the Roles and Capabilities of the United States Intelligence Community, 17.

<sup>19</sup>Chomeau, 407-408.

<sup>20</sup>Goodman and Berkowitz, 29.

<sup>21</sup>Pat M. Holt, Secret Intelligence and Public Policy - A Dilemma of Democracy (Washington: CQ Press, 1994), 157; Clawson, 61.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 157-158.

<sup>23</sup>Goodman and Berkowitz, 56-57.

<sup>24</sup>Commission on the Roles and Capabilities of the United States Intelligence Community, 18.

<sup>25</sup>Holt, 159.

<sup>26</sup>Commission on the Roles and Capabilities of the United States Intelligence Community, 140, 142, 145.

<sup>27</sup>Godson, May, and Schmitt, 174, 176.

<sup>28</sup>Holt, 163.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Jeff Pye, "Woolsey: Why the CIA is Still in Need of Human Touch," Jane's Defence Weekly 22, no. 5 (August 1994): 4; John Hollister Hedley, Checklist for the Future of Intelligence (Gaithersburg: Reproductions, Inc., 1995), 5.

<sup>31</sup>Holt, 163; Hedley, 5.

<sup>32</sup>Clawson, 213.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>34</sup>Clinton, i.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., ii-iii.

<sup>36</sup>Nancy Ethiel, ed., The Changing Nature of Conflict  
(Chicago, IL: Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation, 1996), 46.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Clinton, ii.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., i.

<sup>40</sup>Commission on the Roles and Capabilities of the United  
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